

From: [Thomas Conway](#)
To: [Gowers, Joe](#)
Cc: [Seppi, Pat](#); [Garbarini, Doug](#); [Duda, Damian](#)
Subject: Re: URGENT - Ringwood Superfund Activity
Date: Wednesday, March 10, 2021 11:35:15 AM

Thanks Joe. Please keep me in the loop for any major starts or changes to the plan. The community is on edge and not everyone is comfortable with the lack of information. For example, the air monitoring and activity yesterday raises questions and they don't always have the answers. Anything you can send ahead of time to the Borough is appreciated.

As far as the CAG, I would be happy to facilitate a CAG of Ringwood residents. I know some old members and new members that are ready to meet formally. Please keep me posted on any progress made by Pat. I think a well-functioning CAG will assuage the concerns of residents and reduce the fear of the unknown. I think it is fair for the residents to expect to know what activity is going on adjacent to their properties.

Communication is key to making this as safe as possible. Ideally, considering the known health issues (not talking about the cause), we would wait for the influx of construction workers until the community is able to be protected by a good vaccination rate. Due to the many COVID cases in the past couple of months, it will be awhile until the most vulnerable can receive their vaccinations.

Thanks for responding to my concerns.

-Tom

On Tue, Mar 9, 2021 at 11:45 AM Gowers, Joe <Gowers.Joe@epa.gov> wrote:

Hi Tom – I have spoken with both Craig Coslett and Scott Heck this morning and neither is aware of site-related work being performed at the site last weekend. Furthermore, Ford and the Borough have yet to request EPA's approval to clear trees at the site. On February 26, 2021, EPA submitted its formal comment letter on the draft Remedial Action Work Plan to Ford. This comment letter also included your February 2021 comments as an attachment. Ford is currently preparing a Response to Comments letter which will be submitted to EPA within the next two weeks. Please note that EPA has provided verbal authorization for initiation of some pre-construction activities (baseline air monitoring, pre-construction inspections etc.) at the site which are necessary to implement plans designed to ensure that the remedy is constructed in a manner which is protective of the community and workers (e.g., Health and Safety Plan, Community Air Monitoring Plan, & Vibrations Monitoring Plan). As you are aware of EPA does not establish or control Community Advisory Groups. Regardless, Pat Seppi has been working diligently in trying to procure a facilitator, who will hopefully help facilitate the reconstitution of the CAG.

Joe

Joseph Gowers

Project Manager

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From: Thomas Conway <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, March 08, 2021 4:38 PM
To: Gowers, Joe <Gowers.Joe@epa.gov>
Cc: Lopez, Peter <lopez.peter@epa.gov>; Seppi, Pat <Seppi.Pat@epa.gov>
Subject: URGENT - Ringwood Superfund Activity

Mr. Gowers:

I have heard of a lot of activity in the Upper Ringwood neighborhood this weekend. No one has reached out to the community to let them know what is going on. I don't have any answers either.

It is extremely disappointing that we had a meeting less than two weeks ago to raise concerns and now work appears to have started without a single response to the concerns that were raised. Communication was a repeated concern and here we are failing at that already.

I must ask that we get some type of response to our concerns BEFORE work begins. I know your timeline is tight with endangered species rules, but the lives of humans are in play at this site and the EPA has to address the outstanding issues. Rushing into this work and thereby endangering human lives to comply with a bat's nesting is unethical.

At the very least, can you confirm that all employees working on the site will have passed a criminal background check?

I would like an amended work schedule that applies to the month of March. Residents need to know when heavy equipment will be used near their homes. They cannot lock their children in some of the houses as **there is a COVID outbreak in the community**. This unique health issue needs to be addressed for everyone's safety.

NJ is still in a state of emergency. It is an Environmental Justice issue to conduct everything in the past year virtually when you know that many members of this community are unable to take part. You have effectively prohibited the community from any chance to give input.

With everything going on in this area right now, it is quite possibly the worst time to rush into a massive project. You have been told on many occasions about the concerns and have failed to address them. It is disappointing that in our last meeting you chose the words "we dealt with that question already." I was hoping you would be able to say, "we ANSWERED that question already."

It is the EPA's fault that the CAG is non-functioning at the most important time at this site. I request an immediate cease to all work until proper communication channels are established and criminal background checks on all workers can be confirmed. It was nice of RECON to photocopy dozens of vehicle registrations, now let's get approved background checks with IDs for the site.

Regards,

Thomas Conway

Chair, Ringwood Environmental Commission

Cell:

